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U.S. Department of Agriculture

HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

TUESDAY, May 30, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "Easy Days in Ironing." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

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Summer days ahead. More clothes to launder. More washing and especially more ironing. A hot job for hot weather. Let's give some serious attention to easing up ironing. Even in a routine process like this, you can discover little tricks to lighten the job, little ways to make it go faster and easier and bring better results.

First, how is your ironing board? A good board costs no more than a poor one and makes such a difference with the work and the results. Is your board of a comfortable height? Too low a board makes you stoop when you iron. That's hard on your back and your disposition. Too high a board cramps your arm and makes the job slow and uncomfortable. Is your board firm and steady or shaky and wobbly? A board that is firmly hinged to the wall so you can fold it up when not in use is very convenient and you can make sure that it is steady. Get the man of the house who is handy with tools to put one up for you. If possible have a board upstairs and down to save steps. Next to the wall board, an ironing board on a folding stand is the handiest. Again be sure it stands steady on the floor. The old board that perched across two chairs is out of date. It was always ready to slide out from under, to tip up a chair, drop the iron and cause accidents and it was rarely placed at the proper height.

What about the covering on your board? Is it smooth, firm, well-padded but not too soft. Lumps and creases in the padding make good results difficult. Be sure both the padding and the cover are fastened smooth and tight so they won't slip as you iron. Be sure the cover is clean. Firm smoothly woven material like muslin makes the best cover. Remove the cover frequently and wash it. A soiled cover is apt to stain clothes. To avoid scorching the cover, get into the habit of always tilting the iron on its heel rest or placing it on a stand when not in use.

If you have an electric iron, of course you'll keep it on a shelf near the ironing board, right where you keep your pressing cloths, your bit of paraffin and other ironing equipment. Keep the iron in a box or at least covered up to protect it against dust and rust. Before you start heating the iron, look at the bottom of it. You can easily wash off any scorched starch or soil when the iron is cold. When the iron is hot, you can clean it by rubbing it over dry salt.

How do you wring your clothes? And how do you hang them to dry? The way you do these jobs will make your ironing easy or hard. If you have a wringer, be sure to shake each piece of clothing straight before you put it through the rolls. When tangled clothes go through, wrinkles are pressed in and are hard to iron out. If possible, hang your clothes outdoors to dry. The breeze will help blow out the wrinkles. And hang each article straight and smooth. A friend of mine always hangs her summer dresses on smooth wooden hangers and then pins these hangers to

the clothes line. She puts a couple of clothes pins between the two garments to keep the hangers separate. As for bath towels, dish towels, even sheets and counterpanes, if you hang these carefully to dry they won't need ironing. When you take clothes from the line, fold them into a basket instead of wadding them into a mass of wrinkles.

That brings up the subject of sprinkling. Yes, you'll even discover easy tricks about sprinkling. First, you'll find that you have the best results if you sprinkle your clothes evenly but not too wet. Use a clean whisk broom if you have no other sprinkler. It gives better results than your hand. Warm water for sprinkling penetrates the fabric more quickly than cold. Roll the clothes up tight. Let them stand at least half an hour. But be careful not to let sprinkled clothes stand too long, especially in summer. Most housewives have had sad experiences with mildew stains. And mildew is much more common in warm weather than in cold.

Now for the ironing itself. A regular procedure helps. First iron the sleeves, then the collar, then the back, and last the front. Why? Because you iron first the parts of the garment less apt to wrinkle. To present a good front, iron that the very last. Lay the material flat and straight on the board and iron with the threads. Iron each part of the garment dry or it will wrinkle and pucker. Give special attention to seams, hems and double thicknesses. Pull the seams straight and smooth and hold them at a slight tension to keep them straight until you have ironed them dry.

Buttons? There's another ironing problem. One specialist advises "nosing" around the buttons with the point of your iron. Be careful not to push the buttons off by rough treatment. A soft pad or a Turkish towel helps in ironing rows of small buttons. Turn the garment on the wrong side. Press the buttons down into the soft material and have no fear of scratching or tearing them.

Plaits? You'll find tricks about ironing them, too. If your dress has plaits in the skirt, press the hem first. Then crease each plait to a uniform width with the fingers, holding the upper part of the dress firm so the plaits will be smooth. Run the iron over each plait from top to bottom.

Tomorrow: "Summer Vegetables".

